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ABSTRACT

The use of part-time faculty in baccalaureate nursing programs and the views of part-timers about part-time employment were studies in two phases. The first phase was a descriptive exploration of the use of part-time faculty conducted in 1979 using questionnaires completed by administrative officers. Responses from administrators of 91 institutions represented 36 states and the District of Columbia. Nursing departments reported an average number of 23 full-time and 5 part-time faculty. In the second study phase, conducted in 1983, 515 usable questionnaires were received from a sample of 800 part-time faculty members, who averaged 2.9 years in their present part-time positions. The women in the sample had a mean of 12.5 years experience in the profession. Administrators indicated that they expected a weekly time commitment of 18 hours from part-time faculty and 25 hours from full-timers. More than a quarter of the respondents indicated that they desired a part-time career. It is suggested that these faculty should be eligible for the same pay rate as full-timers and prorated benefits for committee, advising, and other duties. It is concluded that unless the reward system approximates part-timers' responsibilities, there may be serious results for the process and quality of higher education and for the status of women faculty in particular. (SW)

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Reflections on the Status of Women Faculty: Part-Timers in Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

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REFLECTIONS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN FACULTY:

PART-TIMERS IN BACCALAUREATE NURSING PROGRAMS

The purpose of this two-phase investigation was to elicit data from administrators about their use of part-timers and then to ask part-time faculty members to share their perceptions of part-time employment. Phase one was conducted in 1979 with a sample of 91 institutions. A sample of 515 part-time faculty participated in phase two, begun in 1983. This paper describes findings and implications for women faculty in the academe.

REFLECTIONS ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN FACULTY:

PART-TIMERS IN BACCALAUREATE NURSING PROGRAMS

During the decade and a half following the watershed years in higher education, economic constraints have become characteristic of the general tenor of academic life. The hiring of part-time faculty members or the availability of only part-time or temporary positions has become so common that there is considerable fear that non-tenure track faculty will become the norm. It has been estimated that part-timers now number more than 245,000 of the estimated 700,000 faculty members in colleges and universities, and may be responsible for as much as 28% of undergraduate and 21% of graduate teaching. (National Center, 1986; Leslie, Kellams, & Gunne, 1982) Moreover, the predicted mass turnover of those in the tenured professoriate over the next ten years due to retirement may herald an unprecedented use of part-time and temporary faculty. (Pollack, 1986) The intermediate projection figures for 1992 estimate the number of full-timers at 423,000 and of part-timers, 225,000. (Gerald, 1985)

Women are particularly disadvantaged in the academe. They are more likely to have experienced career disruptions, to have held part-time or temporary positions, to hold the untenured or lower rank positions, to be

paid lower salaries, and to have the least seniority. (Sutherland, 1985; Etaugh, 1984; Gray, 1985; Rubin, Whaley, Mitchell & Sharp, 1984; Hansen, 1985; Bergmann, 1985) Women are also most likely to be, in Tobias' words, the "sunlighters" (1977); those part-time faculty members who hold part-time university appointments as their only positions, often with a commitment of time, energy, and longevity of service to the institution as great as that of any full-time person.

Concern with the status of part-time faculty members, particularly women, led to the design of this study to examine their qualifications for and terms of employment, workloads, responsibilities, and their perceptions of part-time positions.

Background

At the time of the conduct of phase one of the study, few data were available concerning part-time faculty members. The AAUP study had not been completed. (Subcommittee, 1981) The work of Tobias (1977) and others (Project on the Status,1976) represented, in a sense, the first exposé of the status of the "invisible" part-timers, primarily women, whose sole work commitment was the part-time position. Attempts had just begun in earnest to challenge universities and colleges to consider pro-rated benefits, accruing of time toward promotion and tenure for

years of part-time service, and a reward system commensurate with responsibilities. (Project on the Status, 1976)

Since nursing is largely a women's profession and faculties in university and college schools of nursing often constitute a significant proportion of women faculty members on a campus, it seemed justified to examine the status of these faculty members as representative of women faculty members in general. However, a couple of limitations to generalizing from this investigation to all women faculty must be acknowledged. Faculty members in clinical professions differ in their role expectations and functions, at least to some degree. A field such as nursing has a preponderance of women may, by its very composition, be ghettoized in the academe. The women comprising faculties such as those of schools and departments of nursing may also differ demographically from their colleagues in other disciplines, e.g. in age, marital status, and educational preparation.

Methodology

The first phase of the study was a descriptive exploration of the use of part-time faculty. A tool, designed to elicit information about responsibilities, opportunities, and terms of employment was sent to the administrative officers of a randomly selected sample of half of the

accredited baccalaureate degree granting programs in nursing in the United States. For the second phase, an instrument to elicit information from part-time faculty members concerning their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities was sent to a sample of 800, obtained through the cooperation of 193 colleges and universities and approached by their deans and department chairpersons with the request to participate. The instrument was pretested on a sample of part-time faculty, as well as reviewed for content validity by faculty members who had held part-time positions.

Characteristics of the Samples

Responses from administrators of 91 colleges and universities (67% response rate) represented 36 states and the District of Columbia. They reported an average number of 23 full-time nursing faculty members and five part-timers (18%). An attempt was made to follow-up on those who did not respond to the initial query. Since many schools did not use part-time faculty at the time of the study, lack of response by one-third of the sample may reflect this fact, at least in some cases.

Of the 800 part-time faculty in the sample, 515 returned usable questionnaires (64%). They average 2.9 years in their present part-time positions, with a range from zero to 13 years. Most (84%) are married.

Their ages range from 24 to 73 years with a mean of 37.9 and they have an average of 1.4 children, of whom almost one-half are preschoolers. The women in the sample are relatively experienced faculty members with a mean of 12.5 years in the profession (range zero to 42 years) and an average of 2.2 years stop-out time for bearing and raising children.

Results

Qualifications and Responsibilities. A master's degree is required by 96% of the responding schools as minimum preparation for a full-time teaching position and by 68% for part-time employment, the other 32% requiring a baccalaureate. The same hiring procedures are utilized for full-time and part-time faculty by 86% of the schools.

Administrators indicated that they expect a weekly time commitment of 18 hours from part-time faculty and 25 for full-timers. Table 1 shows the breakdown and comparison. The 515 faculty respondents indicated that they are responsible for 50-100% of the workload of a full-time person, with the majority of responses falling between 25 and 99%: 21.4% work 25-49% of a full-time load; 47.2%, 50-74% of full-time; and 22.5%, 75-99% of full-time workload equivalent. In addition to teaching in the classroom (58%) and in clinical settings (89%), part-time faculty report they are responsible for student advisement (45%), attending

department or school meetings (64%), attending professional meetings (41%), community service (32%) and clinical practice (20%). Forty-two of the schools in the sample expect part-time persons to serve on school or department committees and the majority extend full voting privileges.

Some part-time faculty are also expected to conduct research and publish. Of the 515 faculty respondents, 15% indicate they are expected to conduct research and 16% to publish.

Reasons for Choosing Part-Time Positions. Obviously, not all part-time faculty persons choose to be part-time. As is evident from the discussion above, there is grave concern among faculty members as they assess the trend toward hiring more persons into part-time and temporary positions. Part-time positions do have certain benefits, however, including flexibility for such activities as graduate education, family obligations, research, and in the arts and practice professions, opportunity for those endeavors. Among the reasons given by the sample were the following: family obligations (54.4%); need for supplemental income (29.3%); interest in part-time career only (26.4%); pursuit of advanced degree (20.8%); involvement in another professional position (20.2%); involvement in clinical practice (18.6%); interest in trying out teaching without major career commitment (11.3%); and postponement of probation

period for tenure (10.1%). Since respondents could choose as many reasons as applied, most did so. A number of persons apparently choose part-time teaching in order to prepare to teach full-time: 3.1% stated that teaching experience was a pre-requisite for full-time and 11.5% have insufficient educational preparation for a full-time position. Fifteen percent are working part-time, as a full-time position is not available.

Salaries, Benefits, Titles, and Career Advancement. The average budget allocation for part-time faculty salaries, as reported by the administrators is 9%. They cite academic preparation, teaching experience, merit raises, cost of living, and criteria such as teaching responsibilities, service to the college or community, number of hours spent in clinical teaching, amount of clinical experience in the area of teaching, publication, and market availability as factors in determining remuneration for part-time teaching. The mean salary of $8962/year is just over half of that of full-timers, $16,240. Fringe benefits range from none to 100%, the majority (71%) receiving 0-24% of full-time. Eight percent receive 100% and 18%, 25-99% of full-time benefits.

Eight of the schools (10%) allow part-time faculty to accrue time toward tenure and 45% to advance in rank. Faculty members indicate they have a variety of titles: instructor (31%); clinical instructor (29%);

assistant professor (16%); and the remaining 23%, lecturer, visiting professor, associate professor, special instructor, adjunct professor, adjunct faculty, clinical lecturer, clinical assistant, and other variations on the same themes.

Faculty Perceptions Concerning Responsibilities. Faculty were asked their perceptions of roles and responsibilities typical of faculty positions and satisfactions and dissatisfactions with aspects of part-time employment such as job security. Most of the 515 respondents indicated that they would like to be involved in a wide range of activities: 66% feel they should be involved in test construction and 88% in determining course content; 41% are interested in participating in governance; 49% feel they should serve on committees, and 79% feel they should be able to vote at department/school committees and meetings. These faculty feel they have a positive effect on the quality of education (89%).

Not surprisingly, part-time faculty feel vulnerable: 41% feel they are more vulnerable to administrative direction than full-timers and less able to make demands such as class size; 70% feel they have little job security; and 57% believe they carry a relatively heavy teaching load. Part-timers also feel they should be paid at the same rate as full-timers (86%) and receive fringe benefits (78%), as well as being allowed to accrue time

toward tenure (69%) and advancement in rank (85%).

The satisfaction scale consisted of 20 items asking faculty to indicate the extent of their satisfaction with characteristics of part-time positions (Alpha co-efficient 0.86) Respondents appear to be most satisfied with opportunities for general career advancement and least satisfied with opportunities to advance up the academic ranks. In general, they seem satisfied with the opportunity to advance in their chosen career (68%); to grow and gain new knowledge and skills through faculty development programs (61%); to have an opportunity for further education (59%); to deal with important social issues in the profession (64%); to build their professional reputations (80%); and to enhance professional growth and development (80%). They are understandably dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity to accrue time toward tenure or promotion ((56%); to earn the salary they feel they deserve (49%); to feel secure from layoffs (51%); and to receive fringe benefits (55%). Interestingly, almost equal numbers were satisfied and dissatisfied with two aspects of their part-time positions: to publish and do research (35% and 27% respectively) and to have a ranked position (37% and 38%).

Colleagues seem important: 85% of the faculty sample find the opportunity to work with colleagues with whom they share goals and

beliefs and 84% to work for persons whose professonal judgment and ability they respect satisfying aspects of their positions. Having a position with status (66%), being able to make full use of ones knowledge and skills (74%), having freedom to carry out their own ideas (75%) and to be appreciated for ones contributions (62%) seem to be satisfying to most of the respondents. Faculty also are generally satisfied with being able to work the number of hours they wish (71%) and to work no harder than is comfortable for their lifestyles (59%).

An analysis of variance was performed for three variables with the satisfaction scale scores: percentage of full-time workload carried; fringe benefits; title (academic rank, if any); and reason for choosing to work part-time. These variables were chosen for the ANOVA because the faculty surveyed seemed most dissatisfied with lack of benefits, salaries that did not reflect proportionately the percentage of a full-time workload, and lack of opportunity to achieve a ranked position or advancement in rank. The ANOVA shows that each of the three variables appears to affect satisfaction with the part-time position. In viewing the various group mean scores, it appears that part-time faculty who carry a workload that is equivalent to 50% of a full-time load, received a 50% or greater proportion of fringe benefits and are in ranked positions tend to be

more satisfied with their positions. (see Table 2)

SUMMARY

Part-time faculty perceive themselves to be making a significant contribution to the programs in which they teach. This finding is not unique to this study, but reported repeatedly in the literature. (Leslie, Kellams, & Gunne, 1982; Flynn, Flynn, Grimm, & Lockhart, 1986) And the facts bear out their perceptions. Faculty holding part-time positions are, for the most part, no less qualified or commited than their full-time counterparts. (Subcommittee, 1981; Tobias, 1977; Tuckman & Caldwell, 1979; Gappa, 1984; Pollack, 1986; Project on the Status, 1976) Moreover, it is obvious that part-time positions will continue to exist, and even expand in number, so these faculty will be making an even greater contribution to higher education.

Women still carry a disproportionate responsibility for child care and household chores (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983). It is understandable, then, that women may choose to work part-time in order to juggle other obligations. However, if the respondents in this study are in any way representative of their colleagues in other academic disciplines, family responsibilities are only one of many reasons that women may choose to work part-time. It is perhaps significant that almost half of the children

of the women in the sample are preschoolers.

More than a quarter of the respondents indicate that they desire only a part-time career. Only twenty percent are involved in a second professional position. These findings support Tobias' thesis that women often work part-time as their only positions. Hypothetically, then, they may make more than a part-time commitment, at least on an emotional level and be, in Tobias' words, "sunlighters." (1977) Indeed, these faculty members have been in their positions from 0-13 years (mean = 2.9) and are very experienced members of the profession (range 0-42 years with a mean of 12.5). Furthermore, research and publishing are required of some of these part-timers and only 11.5% lack credentials for a full-time position. Since these characteristics match Tobias' definition of "sunlighter" status, these faculty should be eligible for the same rate of pay as full-timers and prorated benefits and, in turn, be responsible for committee, advisement and other responsibilities. (1977) From the data, however, these conditions do not appear to exist for a significant percentage of the sample.

Data collected from schools and part-time faculty members in this study support the findings and recommendations of the AAUP Report on the Status of Part-time Faculty (1981) and also of Tobias' work (1977).

Unless the reward system in some way approximates the responsibilities of part-time faculty, there may be serious consequences for the process and quality of higher education and for the status of women faculty members in particular. The ethics of the academe are called into question when the very institutions that espouse equality exploit their own.

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Table 1

Weekly Time Commitment for Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty*

Responsibility	Full-Time	Part-Time
Clinical teaching	15 hours	13 hours
Classroom teaching	5 hours	3 hours
Meetings	5 hours	2 hours
Total	25 hours	18 hours

*N=81 schools

Table 2

Mean Score on Satisfaction Scale

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square (X^2)	F	P
Work %	6.792	4	1.698	2.352	.053
Fringe Benefits %	13.552	4	3.388	4.838	.001
Academic Title	15.301	3	5.100	7.214	.001